

# Stocks end flat

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Dhaka Stock Exchange ended flat yesterday as institutional investors remained inactive in the market.

The gauge, DGEN, finished the day at 4,150 points, after surging 6.18 points or 0.15 percent at 2:30pm closure.

"Lack of sufficient investor participation is causing the market to remain stagnant. Yearend book closure may have reduced fund flow to the market as most of the investors are waiting on the sidelines," stated LankaBangla Securities in its daily market commentary.

Turnover lost 7.8 percent to Tk 181 crore than the previous day.

A total of 0.60 lakh trades were executed with 5.1 crore

shares and mutual fund units changed hand on the Dhaka bourse.

Of the 263 issues that traded on the DSE, 136 advanced, 101 declined and 26 remained unchanged.

Among the major sectors, non-bank financial institutions gained 1.95 percent, banks 0.03 percent and telecom 1.09 percent.

Pharma lost 0.13 percent and power 1.18 percent.

Beximco featured in the most traded stocks chart with 31.12 lakh shares worth Tk 19.51 crore changing hands.

Fas Finance and Investment was the biggest gainer of the day, as it posted a 9.95 percent gain, while Reliance One the First Scheme of Reliance Insurance Mutual Fund was the worst loser, slumping by 5.61 percent.

# Pizza Hut launches year-long celebrations for 10th anniversary

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Pizza Hut started year-long celebrations to mark the 10th year of the brand's presence in Bangladesh by holding a ceremony on Saturday.

Latifur Rahman, chairman of Transcom Foods Ltd that operates Pizza Hut, cut a cake with celebrities such as Tipu, Munmun, Sharmin Lucky and Topu to formally launch the celebrations.

A new pizza called 'Taste of the World', featuring four types of cheeses topped with beef pepperoni, chicken sausage, capsicum, sweet corn, black olives and jalapeno's on a bed of rich chunky sauce, was unveiled on the occasion.

An in-house musical band of Pizza Hut entertained guests at the event.

Pizza Hut is an international restaurant chain in Bangladesh and has outlets in Gulshan, Dhanmondi, Uttara and Bailey Road in Dhaka and one outlet in Chittagong.

Transcom Foods, a subsidiary of Transcom Group, runs the operations of Pizza Hut in Bangladesh and is also the franchisee of KFC.

# BKMEA doubles workers' insurance claims

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Members of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) have unanimously decided to double workers' insurance claims for death to Tk 2 lakh.

The decision to raise the limit, which came after the recent deadly fire at Tazreen Fashions in Ashulia that killed at least 112 workers, came at an emergency meeting of the association at Hotel Purbani in Dhaka on Saturday, where over 400 members took part.

The meeting was organised to ensure security and safety of the knitwear factories, develop capacity, improve owners-workers relations and ensure better environment at factories, the

association said in a statement on Sunday.

BKMEA President AKM Salim Osman urged the factory owners to ensure security of their factories, improve infrastructure and establish a balanced management system.

He also asked them to pay additional attention to stop falling exports growth in the markets in the European Union due to the ongoing debt crisis.

Director General of Fire Service and Civil Defence Abu Nayeem Md Shahidullah, Director General of Industrial Police Abdus Salam, BKMEA First Vice President Mohammad Hatem, Vice President Mahiuddin Faruqi, and Bangladesh Employers' Federation President Fazlul Hoque also spoke.



AQI Chowdhury, director of Eastern Bank, opens the bank's 67th branch at Bhatiari in Chittagong yesterday. Ali Reza Iftekhar, managing director, was also present.

# New president for Gulshan Club

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Irshad Hossain has recently been elected as the president of Gulshan Club for 2012-13. The election took place at the club premises on Saturday, the club said in a statement yesterday.

Ten members of the club's executive committee were also elected. They are: Captain Saifur Rahman, Rita Husain, Sajedur Seraj, Md Abdur Rauf, Shirin



Irshad Hossain

# Capital through rights shares falls in gloomy market

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"The tendency of capital raising through rights offer and IPO increases when the market passes through a bullish trend," said Md Moniruzzaman, managing director of IDLC Investment Ltd, a merchant bank.

"On the other hand, the companies remain in uncertainty in a bearish market."

Besides, Moniruzzaman said, as a major fund was raised in 2010 and 2011, mostly by the financial sector companies to meet regulatory requirements, so the figure fell this year.

But rights share issues were identified as a way of manipulating and inflating price, especially in 2010, by a government probe committee on the stockmarket scam.

The government probe panel on the share market scam of January-February last year in its report said a strong cartel has used the primary market as a tool to fleece people by inflating share prices.

"The 1996 crash took place in the secondary market. But this time it was created in the primary market," said the report, which was released in April last year.

Following a recommendation of the probe committee, the Securities and Exchange Commission modified the rights issue rules to make it more transparent.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina receives blankets for Prime Minister's Relief Fund from Exim Bank Chairman Md Nazrul Islam Mazumder on Sunday. Habibullah Dawn, director of the bank, was also present.



Khondker Fazle Rashid, managing director of Dhaka Bank, attends the signing of a syndication loan of Tk 43.82 crore for Ronak Spinning Mills arranged by the bank at a ceremony recently. Taslima Zannat, chairperson of Ronak Spinning Mills, was also present.

# Dhaka trade fair: shop online

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They would make individual e-commerce websites for around 500 of the stalls participating in the fair, with the registration cost ranging from Tk 15,000 to Tk 1 lakh, she said.

The online marketer has already developed more than 100 sites.

"We will provide all sorts of support, including web portals design, home delivery and call centre support, for the traders," Sejuti said.

The digital DITF market will benefit both the traders and customers -- as it will take the fair to people at home and abroad alike.

Furthermore, local producers without the means to join DITF would also get an opportunity to display their products.

The option is also open to overseas sellers who are unable to travel to Dhaka for the fair.

The digital DITF site comes at a time when online shopping is taking off in Bangladesh in a big way.

Last year, about a dozen online shopping portals or e-trading platforms popped up after Bangladesh Bank introduced online payment service by debit or credit card in local currency.

A 10 percent service charge will be taken, and the deliveries within Bangladesh would be

made within two working days, and five working days in case of foreign countries.

Around 90 people are working to provide the digital DITF service, Sejuti said.

She said a customer can buy products from the digital DITF through debit or credit cards, bank drafts and mobile payment service.

FSB, a youth enterprise that introduced e-commerce in the country in 2009, has clinched the United Nations World Summit Youth Award 2011 for "creating outstanding digital content for rural people".

The e-portal company has direct links with around 5,500 rural people, including farmers, weavers and fishermen, who can post their produce at the portal for sale.

The company, currently serving its customers through its seven e-centres in Mongla, Narsingdi, Tangail, Sirajganj, Jamalpur, Rangpur and Sylhet, has also a database of around 8,000 registered customers, according to officials.

Earlier FSB introduced the first-ever online marketplace for sacrificial animals for Eid-ul-Azha, with the aim to cater to the busy city dwellers and non-resident Bangladeshis.

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# Fear, finger-pointing mount over US 'fiscal cliff'

REUTERS, Washington

Some US lawmakers voiced concern on Sunday that the country would go over "the fiscal cliff" in nine days, triggering harsh spending cuts and tax hikes, and some Republicans charged that was President Barack Obama's goal.

"It's the first time that I feel it's more likely that we will go over the cliff than not," Senator Joe Lieberman, an independent from Connecticut, said on CNN's "State of the Union."

"If we allow that to happen it will be the most colossal consequential act of congressional irresponsibility in a long time, maybe ever in American history."

"It looks like to me that obviously this is going to drag on into next year, which is going to hurt our economy," Republican Senator Bob Corker of Tennessee said on CBS "Capitol Gains."

The Democratic president and Republican House of Representatives Speaker John Boehner, the two key negotiators, are not talking and are out of town for the Christmas holidays. Congress is in recess, and will have only a few days next week to act before January 1.

On the Sunday TV talk shows, no one signaled a change of position that could form the basis for a short-term fix, despite a suggestion from Obama on Friday that he would favour one.

The focus was shifting instead to the days following January 1 when the lowered tax rates dating back to President George W. Bush's administration will have expired, presenting Congress with a redefined and more welcome task that involves only cutting taxes, not raising them.

"I believe we are," going over the cliff, Republican Senator John Barrasso of Wyoming said on Fox News Sunday. "I think the president is eager to go over the cliff for political purposes. I think he sees a political victory at the bottom of the cliff."

Some Republicans have said Obama would welcome the fiscal cliff's tax increases and defense cuts, as well as the chance to blame Republicans for rejecting deal. Obama has rejected that assertion.

Democrats have charged that Boehner has his own self-interested reasons for avoiding a deal before January 3, when the House elected on November 6, is sworn in and casts votes for a new speaker.

Democratic Senator Charles Schumer of New York said on NBC's "Meet the Press" that Boehner has been reluctant to reach across the political aisle for fear it could cost him the speakership when he runs for reelection. "I know he's worried," said Schumer. Boehner, who so far has no serious challenger for the job of speaker, has said that he has no such concerns.

Such finger pointing has been under way since Congress returned after the election, but it has gained intensity in the past few days, with the heightened prospect of plunging off the cliff.

Congress started the clock ticking in August of 2011 on the cliff. The threat of about \$600 billion of spending cuts and tax increases was intended to shock the Democratic-led White House and Senate and the Republican-led House into bridging their many differences to approve a plan to bring tax relief to most Americans and curb runaway federal spending.

Economists say the harsh tax increases and budget cuts from the fiscal cliff could thrust the world's largest economy back into a recession, unless Congress acts quickly to ease the economic blow.

# Shipbuilders offer new prospect for furniture makers

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The society validates that construction is according to the standards and also carries out regular surveys to ensure compliance with the standards.

Providing marine environment-friendly furniture is another requirement for building ocean-going vessels, Alam said.

"We see a big prospect of supplying furniture to the shipbuilders. It will help increase our exports," said Zia Uddin Ahmed, chief commercial officer of Otobi, a leading furniture maker.

Otobi has applied for a certification from Germanischer Lloyd, a Hamburg-based international classification society, a few months ago.

But the furniture maker has not received any response from the society, although the company has necessary expertise and machinery to meet global standards, he said.

"We can now compete with global players as we have adopted the latest machinery and technologies and attracted the foreign buyers," said KM Akhteruzzaman, chairman of Bangladesh Furniture Exporters Association. In fiscal 2011-12, the sector earned around Tk 220 crore from exports, up by 26 percent from the previous year's Tk 174 crore, according to data from the Export Promotion Bureau.

Furniture is one of the rapidly growing sectors in Bangladesh, constituting around 85,000 enterprises and carpentry households across the country, with the annual growth in terms of turnover being around 19 percent.

At present, the size of the local furniture market is at Tk 11,000 crore a year, said Akhteruzzaman.

Commerce Minister GM Quader told The Daily Star recently that the government will come up with necessary support if the sector people put forward



Mohammed Jahangir Alam, chairman of M.I. Cement Factory Ltd (Crown Cement), attends the company's 18th annual general meeting at its factory in Munshiganj on Sunday. The company approved 10 percent stock and 35 percent cash dividends for the year ended on June 30. Md Khabiruddin Molla, managing director, was also present.



AHM Mozammel Hoque, chairman of Hamid Fabrics Ltd, attends the company's 18th annual general meeting at Gulshan in Dhaka recently. The company announced a 20 percent cash dividend for the year ended on June 30.



Md Sefaul Alam, chairman of Jalalabad Gas Transmission and Distribution System Ltd, attends the company's 26th annual general meeting at The Westin Dhaka on Sunday. The company earned Tk 92.59 crore net profit after tax in 2011-12.